

Message Text

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SUBJECT: CTV CONGRESS WRAP-UP

REF: CARACAS 4402

SUMMARY: THE VII CONGRESS OF THE CTV ENDED MAY 1. PRESIDENT PEREZ'S INAUGURAL SPEECH AND ITS ACCOMPANYING ECONOMIC PROCLAMATIONS, PARTICULARLY THE ONE REQUIRING 5 PERCENT MORE EMPLOYMENT FROM ALL COMPANIES WITH OVER 10 EMPLOYEES, WAS THE HIGH POINT OF THE CONGRESS. THE CTV EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IS CONSTITUTED AS PREDICTED REFTEL WITH AD'S JOSE VARGAS AS PRESIDENT AND COPEI'S RAFAEL LEON LEON AS SECRETARY GENERAL. THE CTV COMPLETELY OVERSHADOWED CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC CODESA AND COMMUNIST CUTV AT THE UNIFIED MAY DAY PARADE. PEREZ CALLED ON ALL WORKERS TO UNIONIZE IN HIS MAY DAY ADDRESS. SUBSTANTIVE DECISIONS OF THE CONGRESS WERE OF MINOR IMPORTANCE COMPARED TO PEREZ'S SPEECH AND THE ELECTION OF OFFICERS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE VII CONGRESS OF THE CONFEDERATION OF VENEZUELAN WORKERS (CTV) ENDED IN THE TRADITIONAL MAY DAY PARADE THROUGH DOWNTOWN CARACAS. THE CONGRESS ITSELF EVOLVED MUCH AS PREDICTED WITH FEW LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SURPRISES. THE MOST NOTEWORTHY EVENTS WERE THE SERIES OF SPEECHES

DELIVERED BY PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ (CARACAS 4475) AND THE "ECONOMIC CABINET" MINISTERS, PARTICULARLY MINISTER OF PLANNING GUMERSINDO RODRIGUEZ AND MINISTER OF MINES AND HYDROCARBONS VALENTIN HERNANDEZ (SEPTTEL).

2. THE NEW FIFTEEN-MEMBER EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE CTV WAS ELECTED ON A SINGLE "UNITY" SLATE. IT IS MADE UP OF 8 FROM ACCION DEMOCRATICA (AD), 3 SOCIAL CHRISTIANS (COPEI), 3 FROM THE MOVIMIENTO ELECTORAL DEL PUEBLO (MEP), AND ONE FROM THE UNION DEMOCRATA REPUBLICANA (URD). AD NOT ONLY HAS AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF THE COUNCIL BUT ALSO CONTROLS THE CRITICAL OFFICES OF PRESIDENT (JOSE VARGAS), FINANCE (ANDRES HERNANDEZ VASQUEZ), AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (MANUEL PENALVER). COPEI'S RAFAEL LEON LEON WAS REELECTED SECRETARY GENERAL AFTER A BITTER BATTLE WITH THE MEP AND ANTI-LEON (READ ANTI-COPEI PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL HERRERA CAMPINS) ELEMENTS INSIDE OF COPEI. AD YOUNG TURKS CARLOS LUNA AND ISMARIO GONZALEZ BOTH RECEIVED POSTS ON THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN EXCHANGE FOR ACQUIESCING TO VARGAS'S PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY. THE FULL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND FURTHER ANALYSIS FOLLOW BY AIRGRAM.

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CTV PRESIDENCY IN VENEZUELAN, AND MORE PARTICULARLY AD, POLITICS WAS UNDERLINED BY THE ATTENDANCE AT THE VICTORY CELEBRATION AT JOSE VARGAS'S HOUSE THE EVENING OF APRIL 30. AD FRONTRUNNING PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL PINERUA ORDAZ LED THE LEADERSHIP OF AD. MINISTER OF INTERIOR LEPAGE REPRESENTED THE CABINET. MEP LABOR LEADERS WERE ALSO IN EVIDENCE. COPEI WAS CONSPICUOUS BY ITS ABSENCE. THE PRESENCE OF THE MEPISTAS SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT THE RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN AD AND MEP IN LABOR HAS SURVIVED AD'S REFUSAL TO "LEND" ENOUGH DELEGATES TO MEP TO GIVE MEP THE CTV SECRETARY GENERALSHIP.

4. THE MAY DAY PARADE WAS AN UNPRECEDENTED JOINT EFFORT OF THE CTV, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC CODESA, AND THE COMMUNIST CUTV. THE UNITY PARADE CONFIRMED ONCE MORE THE CTV'S OVERWHELMING MAJORITY POSITION IN VENEZUELAN LABOR. OF THE TENS, POSSIBLY HUNDREDS, OF THOUSANDS OF MARCHERS, APPROXIMATELY TWENTY-FIVE WERE CLEARLY IDENTIFIED AS CODESA WHILE THE CUTV MUSTERED WELL UNDER A THOUSAND PARTICIPANTS. BOTH CODESA AND CUTV CONTINGENTS WERE PLACED WELL BACK IN THE PARADE AND WERE UNABLE ACTUALLY TO ENTER THE EL SILENCIO AREA WHERE THE PARADE DISBANDED AND SPEECHES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WERE MADE, SINCE THE EARLIER CTV UNITS COMPLETELY FILLED IT. THE LAST UNIT IN THE ENTIRE PARADE WAS A GROUP OF ABOUT THIRTY CHILEANS LED BY COMMUNIST LUIS FIGUEROA OF THE CHILEAN LABOR CENTRAL IN EXILE. THE MOST DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COMMUNIST MARCHERS WERE THEIR SIGNS CELEBRATING THE COMMUNIST VICTORIES IN CAMBODIA AND VIET NAM AND THEIR WELL-PRACTICED AND WELL-EXECUTED CHANTS.

5. PRESIDENT PEREZ'S LABOR DAY SPEECH WAS LIMITED TO LAUDING VENEZUELA'S LABOR UNITY AS DEMONSTRATED IN THE UNITY PARADE AND CALLING ON ALL WORKERS TO UNIONIZE. PEREZ POINTED OUT THAT THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IS THE BASIS OF POPULAR SUPPORT FOR REFORM IN VENEZUELA AND THAT LABOR SUPPORT IS A CORNERSTONE OF HIS GOVERNMENT.

6. SUBSTANTIVE DECISIONS OF THE CONGRESS, MOSTLY THE USUAL BOILER PLATE FREQUENTLY PRODUCED BY SUCH MEETINGS, WILL BE DISCUSSED IN A WRAP-UP AIRGRAM. THE CTV WILL GET ITS NEW BUILDING, OLDER LEADERS WILL BE PENSIONED, AND A LABOR ATTACHE CORPS WILL BE ESTABLISHED.

7. COMMENT: THE MOST DISTINGUISHING INTERNAL FEATURE OF THE CONGRESS WAS THE FIGHT OVER THE SECRETARY GENERALSHIP. THE IDENTITY OF THE NEW SECRETARY GENERAL WAS NOT FINALLY RESOLVED UNTIL A FEW HOURS BEFORE THE APRIL 30 AFTERNOON VOTE. DESPITE THIS BATTLE, THE CONGRESS WAS ONE OF THE CALMER, MORE CUT-AND-DRIED AFFAIRS, IN THE HISTORY OF THE CTV. PRESIDENT PEREZ'S CONTROVERSIAL PROCLAMATION REQUIRING COMPANIES WITH OVER 10 EMPLOYEES TO ADD 5 PERCENT MORE WORKERS TO THEIR LABOR FORCES WAS THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE CONGRESS. THE FOREIGN OBSERVERS PLAYED A MINOR ROLE IN THE PROCEEDINGS AND THE AFL-CIO'S MCLELLAN SEEMED SATISFIED THAT HE INDEED HAD BEEN TREATED FAR BETTER THAN THE CUBANS AS THE AD-CTV LEADERSHIP HAD PROMISED (CARACAS 3762). MCLELLAN ALSO AGREED TO RETURN TO VENEZUELA IN JULY, PERHAPS TO DISCUSS THE FUTURE OF ORIT. SHLAUDEMANN

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